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Baptism Eucharist and Ministry

an SCM Study Guide

Edited by Robert Anderson

with assistance from
Peter Gee and Neil McIlwraith

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Robert Anderson, the editor of this booklet, organised the conference on which it is based. He was SCM Scottish Secretary from 1981-3 and is a candidate for the ministry of the Church of Scotland.

Preface

We would all be outraged if differences of sex or race were allowed to intrude into our fellowship at the Lord's Table, so why do we allow our denominational differences to do this? For the past ninety years the Student Christian Movement has worked to unite Christians (firstly in non-denominational then interdenominational and now ecumenical fellowship) for one primary purpose—the mission of the Church. We remember that at root it is not doctrine, tradition or theology which draws us together, nor some kind of fastidious neatness and obsession with uniformity. Quite simply it is the gospel which calls us together in order that it may be more effectively preached; thus the most radical motive for ecumenism is evangelism.

This book is based on talks delivered at the SCM Theological Students Conference, held in Edinburgh during May 1983. The conference took as its theme the report of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (BEM), published in 1982. It brought together 70 seminarians, theological students and SCM members from all the major denominations in Britain, many meeting their counterparts from other denominations for the first time.

Latin American Theology was the theme of the main preparatory seminar for the Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry conference. This helped put subsequent discussions in their place, setting our concern for the divisions within the Church in the context of a brutally divided world. As Professor Reid asked, "How can we ignore our broken fellowship? How can we forget, at the Eucharist, that there is division between churches, division between peoples, between North and South, between rich and poor?"

The BEM Report is uncompromisingly theological, in that it doesn't offer the kind of concessions many Christians seem to expect, in which arguments are

presented in words of one syllable. At one and the same time it is theological and yet comprehensible. Its 32 pages are presented to us as a theological statement, and we are left to interpret them for our own situation.

And there are many basic questions we have to ask. For example: what do the concepts of 'baptism', 'eucharist' and 'ministry' mean to us today? Not what they meant 1200 years ago at Nicea II, or at the Reformation, but what they mean now, today. Are we still able to 'unpack' or 'cash out' these traditional statements in anything like contemporary language, or are the concepts, like the language in which they are couched, irretrievably lost to our modern secular world?

The theologians have presented us with a mature report. Now it is our job to read it in the light of our experience, examining it with the critical tools of our various disciplines.

Robert S Anderson

Edinburgh, July 1983

Acknowledgments:

We wish to thank Professor Reid whose tireless enthusiasm for the BEM Report has placed it firmly on the SCM agenda; those contributors whose adaptability at the conference and help in the kitchen proved invaluable; and the participants who came from all over the country to spend a happy, chaotic weekend with us in Edinburgh.

Introduction

J.K.S. Reid

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God.

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

The first question I would like to raise is quite simple. Why should we bother with what the WCC Faith and Order Commission says to us? I think the answer is quite simple. It is because the Commission is the nearest thing to an ecumenical council since the second Nicene Council of 787. In Geneva today they are talking about a pan-Orthodox conference, which the Orthodox churches of the East are preparing to hold. The preparations have been going on for quite a long time, and they probably will continue for a further long time, but some of the people who are going to be in charge of it have already been appointed, among them some of the press reporters.

The Faith and Order Commission, meeting regularly and finally, at least in its present form, in Lima in January, is the nearest thing to an ecumenical council that has taken place since 787. All the major mainline churches were represented. The Roman Catholic Church was present and took part in a way which it has not done in other departments of the World Council of Churches. So there was full membership and full co-operation from the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox

Churches, the Anglican Church, the Protestant churches and also the other bodies that stand on the edge of the ecumenical movement, including the Quakers and the Salvation Army. So this was, as the Commission's Moderator reminded it at its meetings, "the most comprehensive theological and ecclesiastical forum in Christendom." That is why we ought to look with care at what is said in the document which we will simply call "BEM".

The question for the churches is not the extent and nature of the authority of the Faith and Order Commission, but rather, how seriously do the churches, does my church, take the catholicity of the Church? Is it really so interested in the character of the Church as catholic, that it is willing to listen to what most catholic conferences have said concerning the key issues of Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry? A warning should be expressed right away at the start. No one can possibly agree with everything said by such a quasi-council.

At Nicea II, the controversy chiefly at issue was the matter of how, or whether, the icons which were used in the eastern part of Christendom at that time were properly to be revered. A distinction was made between veneration (proskunesis) and adoration (latreia), but this was very bitterly opposed by the Iconoclasts who wanted to condemn all respect for icons. It would be impossible for everything said by a council of this kind today to please everyone equally. And further, it would be quite impossible for everyone to find in it everything they would wish to put in such a statement. That would require an entirely different kind of enterprise. The only way of doing that would be to abandon anything like a catholic, ecumenical conference of any kind, and simply to go into a corner and write out what you yourself would like to say.

Distaste will certainly be occasioned by some things and some omissions in the document before us. Let me give you one simple example. The term 'Eucharist' is one which is used far more by certain denominations than others. I can hear those to whom this term is not very familiar, asking themselves why can't they call it the 'Lord's Supper'? Now I don't know that this was explicitly discussed at any point. It came really as

the result of a convergence of opinion that 'Eucharist' was the term which had the widest appeal and which also conveyed a certain character of the Lord's Supper, that character of joyousness very often missing from the Lord's Supper as practised in some of our churches. It is a good New Testament term; it comes directly from the account given of Jesus inaugurating his own last Supper. It comes from the Greek word meaning 'having given thanks'.

And if those denominations which don't really use the 'Eucharist' very often would simply ask themselves, "Does this simple term to which I am not accustomed have something to tell me?, the answer is yes. As Dr. Forrester has been reminding Church of Scotland people in that Church's magazine, worship should be a matter of gladness and joyousness. This note is sometimes sadly lacking in the celebrations of those who don't use the term 'Eucharist'. Simply to consider that term might throw a flood of light and let a new aspect dawn on those who don't use it. Everything depends then on what you make of this distaste. It may, if you allow it to generate grievance, simply turn into an offence, or you may make of it an opportunity. You may have a revulsion against the text, or you may take all the things which seem to be distasteful and regard them as a challenge - a chance to look behind those differences of terminology to see what the other partner in the dialogue really means. Whether this is seen as a challenge or offence depends on how earnest a church is about being a member of the total catholic apostolic church.

The second thing I would like to say is simply a word or two about how this report came about. It is the culmination of something like fifty years of work, work which effectively began in Lausanne in 1927. Alongside the Faith and Order Commission, as many people know, there was also a parallel kind of activity called Life and Work. Life and Work, in fact, began soon after the Great War, in 1919, and Faith and Order took its place alongside a little later. Life and Work was designed to help the churches to do things for a needy world, an especially needy world after the 1914-18 war. The Faith and Order movement was designed precisely to address itself to those problems which became divisive

amongst the churches, to see whether a greater degree of unity was not possible by talking with one another, understanding what the other church stood for, and moving forward in hope of convergence. The last stages of this fifty year process started about 1975 when an earlier edition of this document was issued under the title "One Baptism, One Eucharist and a Mutually-recognised Ministry". This was revised and further revised until 1982. I think it is important to realise one thing: it is quite wrong to think of a number of church leaders all sitting together, thinking something up, and then delivering a broadside to the obedient churches, for all the world like Moses coming down from Sinai. This process has been entirely different. In fact, all along the line, and especially since 1975, the churches have been consulted, and they have responded magnificently in the consultations to which they were invited. I think it is proper to say that probably half of the 300 churches made some kind of response. A large number of independent theologians were also consulted, and they put forward recommendations for changes, for alterations and differences of emphasis in the document. Then, at the last moment, in the last hours before the document was approved, something like 200 alterations and amendments were proposed by the delegates themselves, in Lima in January 1982.

Finally, at about midday on January 15th 1982, approval was given and the 120 delegates and representatives of the churches erupted into applause, something that has never happened before in the history of Faith and Order..

It is necessary to remind ourselves of the exact status of this document. As the introduction to the report states: "the commission judged the process to have been brought to such a stage of maturity that it could now go before the churches for the process known as acceptance." That is to say the document is not a final document; it is designed to promote discussion and even controversy between the churches and within the churches, in order that what has been said may have the fullest kind of discussion and consideration. Our churches are asked to take certain measures in their consideration of these documents (see BEM page 10).

The churches are asked first of all: "to determine the extent to which your church can recognise in this text the faith of the church through the ages; and secondly, "the consequences your church will draw from this text for its relations and dialogues with other churches, particularly with those churches which also recognise the text as an expression of the apostolic faith".

The document is not finished, but it has great significance. John Deschner, in introducing it, said at one point:

"If a man and a woman said things like this to each other, and no marriage took place, someone could be sued for breach of promise!"

In a manner of speaking, the theologians have said, "according to our understanding of the matter there is this degree of convergence and indeed identity between us; what will you, the leaders of the churches, make of it?" The leaders of the churches are now asked to express what degree of acceptance is possible, whether they can regard this document as an expression of the faith of the Church throughout all the ages.

I should like to add two further things. One concerns the three parts of this document, Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry. These matters are chosen chiefly because they are, as William Lazareth, the secretary of the Faith and Order Commission expressed it, "neuralgic points at which division takes place" - division so deep that unless some kind of convergence or agreement can be there achieved unity will remain outside our grasp. The second thing to be said is that these three elements, Baptism, Eucharist, Ministry, are not only important but they belong to a category which is comparatively small, a category of difference of opinion which is so deep and so radical, that unless resolved the disunity and separation of the churches may properly be said to be justified in its continuance. On the whole, though there are vast and innumerable differences between our churches, very few of them are so deeply divisive as properly to justify the continuance of our separation. May I give you an example?

It is really a matter of indifference whether, in

the Lord's Prayer, we use the words 'trespasses' or 'debts'. It is also a matter of indifference whether, unlike the Roman Catholic Church until recently, we include the Gloria at the end of the Lord's Prayer, "for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory". It won't really matter very much that churches differ on these matters; and certainly they cannot think their separation justified on these grounds. But some differences are so important that they really do justify further separation until some kind of agreement can be reached. And I think it is of the utmost importance that the churches today should grapple with the distinction between these two things. Yves Congar puts the point well:

"I think the prime theological problem raised today in the churches is that of specifying what differences are compatible with the establishment of full communion."

Finally, to put the thing into perspective, it is worth mentioning that the activities of the Faith and Order Commission at Lima were not wholly and exclusively directed to the preparation of the report BEM. They had five other equally important elements, and it is important that this should be remembered by those who are studying it. Not only was BEM directing its attention to trying to overcome the differences between the churches; it was also directing its attention to trying to overcome the differences between the peoples of the world. So one of the main activities of the Commission is entitled, "The Unity of the Church and the Renewal of the Human Community". Hans Kung recently made the same point: the unity of the church is inseparable from the world as such. And it is time, as he put it himself, that the churches got on not merely to world disarmament but also to denominational disarmament. The unity of the church and the unity of the world are inseparable from one another, and while we sometimes have to take into particular consideration the divisions between our churches, while and insofar as we deal with them, we are at the same time dealing with divisions which separate into hostile parties and categories the world which God has given us to live in.

Baptism

Elizabeth Templeton

If you haven't read the BEM Report, the first thing to say is that, in some ways, it is a remarkably unintimidating document. For a start, it is only 33 pages long. And it is broken up into quite short, readable sections. The Baptism section, for example, has just twenty-three paragraphs, and those paragraphs are interspersed with comments indicating some of the theological issues which obviously have emerged from different members of the Commission. It would be impossible, in the space available, to give you a fully comprehensive study, so I am just going to give you an indication of the structure of the section on Baptism. I will then concentrate on the section on the meaning of baptism and then make some comments on that.

There are, in fact, three sections within the Baptism part. The first deals with the meaning of baptism, while the second deals with the practice of baptism, in which I suppose the main issue is between those who believe in infant baptism and those who believe only in believers' baptism as adults, or at least as children capable of making a confession of faith themselves. And the third section is about the celebration of baptism and deals with matters of rather more technical liturgical practice, reformed baptism, the orders of ministry involved and that kind of thing.

FIVE ELEMENTS

In the section on the meaning of baptism, there are five main elements which represent the consensus of understanding among those in Faith and Order who have worked on this. I will give you those five elements and a sentence about each of them.

The first is participation in Christ's death and resurrection: "By baptism, Christians are immersed

in the liberating death of Christ, where their sins are buried, where the old Adam is crucified with Christ and where the power of sin is broken. They are raised here and now to a new life in the power of Christ."

Secondly, baptism is seen as conversion, pardoning and cleansing: "Those baptised are pardoned, cleansed and sanctified by Christ and given a new ethical orientation".

Third, the gift of the Spirit: "God bestows on all baptised persons the anointing and the promise of the Holy Spirit".

Fourth, incorporation into the Body of Christ: "Baptism is the bringing into unison with Christ, with each other and with the Church of every time and place, each baptised person."

Finally, fifth, baptism is the sign of the kingdom: "Baptism initiates the reality of the new life, given in the midst of the present world. It gives participation in the community of the Holy Spirit."

From the point of view of churchmen and theologians who are used to tooth-combing theological utterances, it does seem to me that this document displays an amazing degree of unanimity, and on that level it obviously represents real ecumenical progress, and I don't want in any way to undermine that. But what I want to do is to raise some questions or make some comments, from the point of view of the average lay Christian, or even from the point of view of an outsider to the Christian faith who happened on this book; I suspect that, even to quite a faithful and diligent church member, the words in this book would be curiously like the words that you hear often in church on Sunday: very familiar but rather opaque. Although it was not the job of the committee producing this document, it is our job to undertake the further major ecumenical task of interpreting these words in a contemporary idiom.

What does it mean to someone outside the Church to hear us make the affirmation that we participate

in Christ's death and resurrection? We still manifestly die. We still manifestly sin. We do not in many respects look different from the unbaptised. So what sort of actual differences are we saying that baptism makes? Or again, are all the things which this report affirms - participation in the life of Christ, sanctification by the Spirit and so on - things which only happen to the baptised? Can God not do whatever he does for human beings without baptism? In what sense is baptism a necessary act for participation in the new life of Christ?

Certainly for me, this is the central theological question about baptism, or about any sacrament: "What is the relationship between the love and freedom of God towards the world and the sacramental life of the churches? Is it a relationship of necessity, or is it some kind of optional sign? Does God really have a different relationship to the Church from his relationship to the world? And if so what is the difference?

COMMENTS

Those are the questions. I would just like to finish with four comments, again very telegraphic and all of them needing a lot of expansion.

First of all, (though I don't think BEM makes the equation) we have to be very careful in interpreting it that we do not give people the impression that the act of God in the world can be equated with a ritual. Sacraments are not automatic push button transfers of grace. They are some kind of expression of the dynamic relation between God and the world, in which both God and the world have their freedom. I think that is what is entailed in the part of the liturgy which those of you from Anglican or Catholic traditions will know better, the part of the liturgy called epiclesis or the calling down or invocation of the Spirit. That, I think, is meant to be rebutting the suggestion that whatever goes on in a sacrament is just God as an automatic super cause, producing a super-effect. There is some kind of freedom and dynamism involved in this. And it follows that, since it is not a sort of mechanical push-button thing,

we should not be surprised that there is no provable change "Persil-washedness" about people who have been baptised. It is not that sort of relationship.

Secondly, about the need or necessity for sacraments. What seems to me positive about insisting that the sacramental life of Christ is not just a sort of accidental option, is that counters the risk which I think is a very major risk today, of spiritualising the action of God in the world into some kind of inner mystical experience. What sacraments do is to hold up the physical world - the world of water or bread or wine - for the transformation to new life, which is God's promise to the natural world. The point is made in the Baptism section that some churches have wanted very much to emphasise that baptism is not just something that is happening to people, to souls or spirits, but something that is happening in a way to the whole cosmos. It is a sign of that. If you like, although it may be a slightly risky analogy, to say that God's love and freedom can be better manifested without the signs might be a bit like saying that human love is better manifested without touch or without eye-contact. It is a kind of formed presence, or a symbol of the formed presence, of God's relation to the world.

I think my main comment is that I read this report with some kind of excitement, but also with a sense of a vast job still needing to be done, in terms of catching phrases like "incorporation into the body of Christ". And I think those of us who are, as it were, living in a world that speaks this language, either because we are so inside the Church or so inside theological college or even so inside Scripture, are not aware enough of the gap there is between that kind of language and the people passing outside the door. What sort of change is involved in "incorporation into the body of Christ?" That question is one which should be on your agenda as you discuss the document.

Fourthly, my final comment is that, though it

is not in any way the intention of the Faith and Order Commission, there is a risk for those who read and quote this document that all of this could become too churchly a statement. The Church, it seems to me, is the community which is trying to be explicit and articulate about the relation between God and the world, but its reason for existing, its reason for having sacraments, its reason for being the community it is, is not for its own sake but for the sake of the world and the world's future. In a sense, what the Church is called to do, is to represent the future of the world, hoped for in God. So it is not intelligible to talk about baptism within the churches unless we can begin to interpret what it means for the world that there is inside it a community, as it were, of the baptised or of those who share the Eucharist.

That would be my final comment: that we cannot do theology, even ecumenical theology, especially ecumenical theology, if the doctrine seems to be for the churches alone, and does not reach out to the world which is at present unchurched.

SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

A. Your own experience:

What have your experiences of baptism, either as a participant or an onlooker, been like?

Have you had any experience of baptism in other denominations, or overseas?

Discuss your experiences with one another.

B. Reflection: Scripture and Tradition

"In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptised by John in the Jordan. And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens opened and the Spirit descended upon him like a dove;

and a voice came from heaven, 'Thou art my beloved Son, with thee I am well pleased.'

(Mark 1:9-11)

"Baptism is, as it were, the ordination of a new member of the royal priesthood; it is the making of a layperson in the Church of Christ."

(Lukas Vischer: Ye are Baptised)

C: Questions for discussion:

What do we mean when we talk about:

"dying and rising with Christ" or "incorporation into the Body of Christ" ?

How would you put these concepts in plain language - in terms that could be understood by someone outside the church?

What does Baptism signify in and for the world?

Baptism symbolises:

- * cleansing from sin?

- * dying and rising with Christ?

- * entry into the community of believers?

- * the giving of God's grace?

- * and what else?

Eucharist

Kenyon Wright

I have to begin by making a confession. As will become obvious as I go along, I am neither an academic theologian nor an expert in the Eucharist, but as my wife once said on a previous occasion when I said I knew nothing about this subject, "well, that's never stopped you before". So on the basis of at least an ordinary Christian's understanding of the subject and on no other grounds, I approach this dreadful task.

The BEM Report is clearly significant. Many people are quite euphoric, if not lyrical about it. The letter which Phillip Potter (the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches) sent out to all the churches, asking them to consider this, begins, "It is with great joy I send you..." There are not many letters from the World Council of Churches which begin in that way. And it goes on to say: "Most observers have agreed it is unprecedented in the modern ecumenical movement for theologians in such varied church traditions", and then he names them all, "to speak so harmoniously on fundamental questions of doctrine".

Is that kind of euphoria justified? I certainly find it personally very significant because I tended, rather mythologically, I think, to be convinced that the Church was divided into at least three groups of people, who did not really communicate much with one another: there were the academic theologians who spoke to one another in their own special language; the radical activists who were engaged in the 'coalface' or the frontier between the church and the world, in things like urban mission, industrial mission, or evangelical academies, all over the world, and who were convinced that God was speaking to them through the events of the world; and there were the majority of ordinary church members and ministers, who went on with their jumble sales, and did not often

seem to take very seriously the other two groups. Now this report goes some of the way to convincing me that I have been wrong, that people have been listening. And I am very glad to recognise that I have been wrong in that. The other thing, of course is to recognise the minor miracle of a hundred odd theologians all agreeing with one another. It has been my experience that, if you get three theologians in a room, you have four opinions. And to have a document like this does really reinforce, or perhaps bring back, one's faith in the Holy Spirit. There must be a Holy Spirit if this happens. And that's not meant to be funny. I really do believe the Holy Spirit must have been at work in this fifty year process to have produced this.

CONTRADICTIONS

My own memory of the 'Holy Communion', the 'Lord's Supper', the 'Eucharist', will be, as yours will be, I am sure, full of contradictions. I remember many occasions when, at least subjectively, it seemed to mean little and I remember so many other occasions when something of the Holy Spirit spoke unmistakeably through it. I share these personal experiences because they all say something theologically which is in this text. I remember the variety of experience: the black coated figures who serve communion in Dunblane Cathedral in an atmosphere of great solemnity - that is not meant to be a put-down - as compared with the joyous shouting and singing of communion in Tanzania, where I was three years ago, and the sort of disorder, the orderly disorder of that great meeting, and the communion of the Orthodox Church in Ethiopia with the singing lines of priests who dance as they sing before the actual communion service. Three memories in particular came to mind when I was preparing for this.

One was of a service in Coventry Cathedral, in front of the ruined Altar of Reconciliation, when we had an international gathering of young people. There, in the open air, were young people of so many countries, east and west, north and south, celebrating together. Something happened then. The second experience took place on a visit I made to Auschwitz four years ago. I met an elderly man, who has since died, Brann Huber, who

had been a prisoner in the camp but was saved because, as an artist, he was used by the SS guards for painting. He used to make the patches worn by prisoners to indicate whether they were Jews or gypsies or homosexuals, or whatever other brands of people they considered worthy of destruction or at least of subhuman treatment. He showed me a small paten and chalice with which communion was regularly celebrated in Auschwitz. He used to hide them in a cupboard in the midst of the patches. If they had been discovered it would have meant death.

He bore witness to the tremendous strength which that little communion - in anything: there was no bread and wine, though there might have been a bit of bread-crust occasionally - gave to the Christians in that place, at that time. I say this because it is not irrelevant; it is not just a touching story. I think it has a great deal to do with the central meaning of the Eucharist.

My third story is of the occasion when I myself cycled out in my early missionary days in India to a village called Chamada in West Bengal. The community there had gone through a traumatic experience of death through disease, which I had not known about, and they asked for communion. There was no preparation; I had nothing with me. I said, "What have you got?" They brought one orange and a cream cracker biscuit. There in that village, one of the most real communion services I have ever shared was celebrated with a cream cracker biscuit and a squeezed orange. Now that is not intended to raise a discussion about what has to be used in the elements. It is intended to speak, rather, about the central meaning of this.

Let me go on from those stories, which I hope will be illustrated in what I come on to, the actual text of the Eucharist section in the BEM Report. It is in three parts; a brief introduction on the institution of the Eucharist; a longer section on the meaning of the Eucharist; and again, a brief section on the celebration of the Eucharist.

THE INSTITUTION

The section on the institution I can go over quite briefly. It makes two points; the first is that it is a gift from the Lord. The Church receives the Eucharist as a gift from the Lord. Secondly it relates it to the other meals Jesus shared, and to his self revealing in these other meals, for example, especially after the resurrection, the meal in which, in the breaking of the bread, he was made known to his disciples. It says:

"The last meal celebrated by Jesus was a liturgical meal, employing symbolic words and actions. Consequently, the Eucharist is a sacramental meal, which, by visible signs, communicates to us God's love in Jesus Christ, the love by which Jesus loved his own to the end." That is the basic statement on the institution.

THE MEANING

When the meaning of the Eucharist is considered, we come, I think, to the neuralgic points which Professor Reid referred to. In Communion, the two most neuralgic points might be indicated by the two phrases, 'sacrifice' and 'real presence'. Those have been foci for disagreement and misunderstanding. Let me try to go through this and pick out the points where one might have expected disagreement to be obvious, or at least convergence to be least likely. The meaning of the 'Eucharist' is covered in five sections. First, (a) the Eucharist is a thanksgiving to the Father. Now in this section, the phrase I would like to pick out is this, in paragraph 4:

"The Eucharist is the great sacrifice of praise by which the Church speaks on behalf of the whole creation".

The very interesting point for me is that this paragraph (a) on the meaning of the Eucharist, very clearly and decisively relates the Eucharist to the whole world's renewal and recreation. It is a thanksgiving to the Father on behalf of and with the whole of creation. This note is constantly repeated throughout the whole of this passage, and indeed, throughout the whole document. If I may read the last part of paragraph 4:

"the Eucharist thus signifies what the world is to become: an offering and a hymn of praise to the Creator,

a universal communion in the body of Christ, a kingdom of justice, love and peace in the Holy Spirit".

This sense of looking forward and of offering to God on behalf of all is present in this thanksgiving to the Father.

Secondly, when we come to (b), the Eucharist as anamnesis or memoria of Christ, we come to some of these neuralgic points we referred to:

"the Eucharist is the memorial of the crucified and risen Christ. The biblical idea of memorial as applied to the Eucharist refers to the present efficacy of God's work when it is celebrated by God's people in a liturgy. The anamnesis acts as a joyful celebration of the Church's love, both representation and anticipation."

Now again you have two elements of the representational, the memorial in the sense of the present efficacy of God's word from the past and the looking forward, the anticipation of the great feast. It is not only a calling to mind of what is past and of significance. It is the Church's effective proclamation of God's mighty acts and promises. Then, on sacrifice, this statement:

"The Eucharist is the sacrament of the unique sacrifice of Christ who ever lives to make intercession for us. It is the memorial of all that God has done for the salvation of the world. What it was God's will to accomplish in the Incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ, God does not repeat".

This is a very interesting and absolutely clear statement of the unrepeatability of the sacrifice of Christ. God does not repeat. These events are unique and are neither repeated nor prolonged. In the memorial of the Eucharist, however, the Church offers its intercession in communion with Christ, our great High Priest. And there is in the commentary a very clear reference to the propitiatory sacrifice:

"In the light of the significance of the Eucharist as intercession, references to the Eucharist in Catholic theology as propitiatory sacrifice may be understood. The understanding is that there is only one expiation: that of the unique sacrifice of the Cross, made actual

in the Eucharist and presented before the Father in the intercession of Christ, and then in the light of the biblical conception of 'memorial', all churches might want to review the old controversies about sacrifice, and deepen their understanding of the reasons why other traditions have either used or rejected this term".

In other words, there is here offered not an absolute answer but an interpretation of the meaning of 'sacrifice' and of 'memorial' which should enable those churches which, traditionally, have stood on one or the other to understand and listen more carefully to what is meant, not to misinterpret it and therefore to come to some possible convergence of understanding.

In paragraph 13 of that section, we then come to the whole question of the presence of Christ, the 'real presence' and what that means.

"The words and acts of Christ at the institution stand at the heart of the celebration, the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, the sacrament of his real presence" - then it goes on to interpret that: "While Christ's real presence in the Eucharist does not depend on the faith of the individual, all agree that to discern the body and blood of Christ, faith is required."

Then there is again a commentary on paragraph 13, which clearly recognises this as a key point of discussion and, indeed of division in the past, and recognises that there is a difference here and says:

"The decision remains for the churches whether this difference can be accommodated within a convergence formulated within the text itself".

They do not answer that question. They leave it as a question. The question remains whether that particular difference on the interpretation of the 'real presence' of Christ can be held within the convergence of the text.

There is then a section on the Eucharist and the invocation of the Spirit, which again clearly relates it to the gift of the Holy Spirit, which has been referred to in the sacrament; and then on the Eucharist as the communion of the faithful, so that even in a local

Eucharistic celebration, the whole Church is somehow involved. The universal Church is there even when the celebration is, as it usually is, local. It stresses the relation between the communion and our whole experience of life, corporate and individual, and that there is, in fact, no possibility of playing these off against each other. This is a constant challenge. A search for the appropriate relationships in social, economic and political life is demanded by the Eucharistic celebration.

Then, finally, section (d), 'the meal of the kingdom', which again is speaking very largely in terms of the relationship of the Church to the kingdom of God, and therefore the anticipatory meal. It finishes with this statement:

"Insofar as Christians cannot unite in full fellowship around the same table, to eat the same loaf and drink from the same cup, their missionary witness is weakened, both at the individual and at the corporate level."

There is here a very clear relationship between the kingdom and the celebration, between the missionary witness of the Church to the kingdom of God.

THE CELEBRATION

The last section on the celebration of the Eucharist, has some recommendations which might be controversial, so let me pick them out. It does say in paragraph 31, that;

"as the Eucharist celebrates the resurrection of Christ, it is appropriate that it should take place at least every Sunday. As it is the new sacramental meal of the people of God, every Christian should be encouraged to seek communion frequently."

There is a definite recommendation of weekly celebration, on the basis of it being the celebration of the resurrection of Christ, which is celebrated every first day of the week, and on the frequency of participation by Christians in the receiving of communion.

Now, with those comments on the text itself, I want to finish by making a comment about the reception of the Report. The key to this is not just in the text itself, important though that is, but on what happens to it, on

how it is understood and what the churches actually do with this, not just at the denominational level. I think that is absolutely vital. There are a couple of things I want to say here. First, that the reception must begin with self-examination, not with an immediate dogmatic or historical response to that part of the text with which we agree or disagree. It is so easy to start with our prejudices, or indeed what we feel to be our strongly held convictions, and immediately to react against those parts of the text-and there are parts, and there always will be parts - which do not represent what we have traditionally believed.

SELF-EXAMINATION

I therefore suggest that it has to begin with this act of self-examination, first of the non theological factors which have predetermined our understandings. At the very least, this should help us clear away some of the rubble which prevents us from getting through to one another, which prevents us from hearing sensitively, and in love, what the other is really saying. And there is a lot of that rubble about, the non-theological factors. It should at least help us to clear some of that away, so we can hear more clearly. I hope this will be used in local situations educationally to do just that, to enable local groups of Roman Catholics, Church of Scotland, Methodist, Anglican, whoever, to listen to one another in the light of this, to use this as a 'tool' to clear away the rubble, and to look instead at what really is said and believed rather than our historical presuppositions about what is really believed.

Secondly, that act of self-examination will also be, a very deep questioning. The question being asked about this document is,

"Do you recognise in this the apostolic faith, the faith of the Church through history?" Not: "Do you recognise in it everything you believe," but; "do you recognise in it the apostolic faith?" And, I think, I would want to add a second question, because that question looks back to history. I would want to add the question, does it help us to recognise God's moment when it comes today?

The question we ask about a mutual understanding of those central things of the Christian faith has got to

be both a question about God's truth spoken in the past, but also a question about the ability to hear God's truth spoken today. Jesus wept over Jerusalem because, despite their marvellous understanding of their faith, they did not recognise God's moment when it came. Does this help us to recognise God's moment in 1983, and in the 1980's and 1990's when God is going to speak, I believe, in dramatically new ways, through the discontinuities of the world around about us?

I hope too, that the churches will go on to ask themselves another key question: "What is it in our faith or practice which is so important that it is more important than the unity of God's church?" Notice how I phrase the question. I'm not prejudging the answer, but I think it will be difficult, put like this, to answer in ways that are convincing.

Finally, I want to stress that the convergence here is not only a convergence of theologians of different denominations. It is also a convergence of the local and universal church. I believe that the next steps in ecumenism will be equally represented by local initiative. Thank God, in Scotland, there's quite a bit of evidence of local things happening. But there must also be a convergence between our concern for the kingdom of God in human society and our concern for the evangel, the gospel, in its presentation to each of us for personal decision. This is desperately needed by the churches. In other words, the strange and desperate dichotomy between social concern for justice and peace and the concern for the presentation of the gospel for faith and response, must, I think, be bridged if the Church is to be faithful in the days ahead. This document is a tool to help us achieve that larger convergence.

SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

A. Your own experience

Describe two different eucharistic services you have attended, one good, and one not so good.

Describe your experience of a eucharistic service in a denomination other than your own.

What place does the Eucharist have in your own life, and how does it relate to the rest of your religious life?

Discuss your experiences with one another.

B. Reflection: Scripture and Tradition

"Our Lord come. (maranatha)" (1Cor16:22)

"For where two or three of you are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them"

(Matthew 18:20)

"For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, 'This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same manner also the cup, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me'. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

(1 Corinthians 11:23-6)

C: Questions for discussion

How important is visible unity at the Lord's Table?

Why do we talk of breaking bread?

Do you think of the Eucharist in terms of:

- * remembrance
- * celebration
- * sustenance
- * duty
- * communion and community
- * mystery
- * solidarity with the poor
- * sacrifice
- * what else?

Paragraph 23 of the Report says: "The world is present in the Eucharist"

What do you make of this?

Ministry

Frank Kennedy

By way of introduction, I would like to point out that I have a dual interest in the subject of ministry. Firstly, I teach in a seminary preparing priests for parishes in the West of Scotland. I am not, however, a systematic theologian. I teach philosophy, not theology. That is not to say that I am totally ignorant of ministry, but that my involvement in the subject is more on the practical level of how we prepare people or what are we preparing them for. I am less able to give accurate comments on the ins and outs of Roman Catholic theology on ministry as it stands at present. That means, on the other hand, that I am quite willing to chance my arm.

Secondly, I am an industrial chaplain, and part of an inter-church team. In other words, I share in a ministry which is already very ecumenical, already very united. I have found this document - and particularly the study on ministry - very challenging because I think I have fallen into the trap Kenyon Wright refers to in his essay when he talks of those who get on with the 'coal face' ecumenism and don't worry too much about the theory behind it. I take for granted that I'm working in a team with people of other denominations - Church of Scotland, Methodist, Episcopal. We take this for granted and don't worry too much about justifying it. It has been very useful for me to look at a statement like this, which asks me to think about what I am doing, precisely what I otherwise take for granted.

I was astonished at the degree of theological convergence I found in the BEM document. I am happy to be able to offer a very heartfelt vote of thanks to Professor Reid and, through him, all the others on the Faith and Order Commission for this very refreshing and encouraging document.

There are six sections in the chapter on ministry: the calling of the whole people of God; the Church and the ordained ministry; the forms of the ordained ministry; succession in the apostolic tradition; ordination; towards the mutual recognition of ordained ministries.

I do not propose to talk on all six. I shall miss out two - apostolic tradition and ordination. I had decided on this before I read Professor Reid's report, Lima 82, which points out that those are the two areas in the Report which are causing unhappiness. Roman Catholics would like more comment on the role of the Pope, while Quakers and members of the Salvation Army do not see the need for ordination. On the latter point, no comment. On apostolic succession - a very brief word. It is not unfair to suggest there is a touch of paranoia in the Roman Catholic tradition about apostolic succession. We feel we have to prove a chain of physical contact right up to Peter himself. I think we are learning from this kind of discussion to have a much broader, much richer vision of the apostolic succession.

THE CALLING OF THE WHOLE PEOPLE OF GOD

There is a cliché in philosophy that the right answer is not all that important. What is important is the right question. If you don't ask the right question it does not matter what kind of answer you get anyway. Hence the value of the order followed by the BEM section on Ministry. Had it plunged immediately into questions like: "Will Rome recognise Anglican orders?" or "Can I accept communion from someone not in the Roman tradition?" then it would have missed the point, it would have been going in the wrong direction. It does not make that mistake. It rightly begins by stressing that when we talk of ministry we talk first of all about the ministry of the whole church - the calling of the whole people of God:

"The Church is called to proclaim and prefigure the Kingdom of God. It accomplishes this by announcing the Gospel to the world and by its very existence as the Body of Christ." (1.4)

That is where we have to start. To talk of ministry is not to talk about something I personally 'own' because I am ordained. It is rather to talk about the ministry of Christ to the world, the sending of the Son, the very core of our faith. It is to talk of the Church - understood as those who have a vision of God at work in the world and a mission to point out to the world the reality of God's love, God's power and God's presence.

To talk of ministry is, first of all, to talk about the ministry of the Church to the world. Now that does not mean that 'we have the answer' and we give that 'answer' to the world. There is an interesting balance in the text just quoted about the Church 'announcing the Gospel' and 'being the body of Christ'. We are the Church. We should be ('should be', not 'are') more sensitive than others to the presence of God in the world. We know the scriptures - they give us the pattern of God's action - and we should therefore be able to recognise that action as we see it in the world, whether in the Church or elsewhere. Our mission, then, our 'announcing the Gospel' is to support, encourage, point to the action of God in his world and in his people.

In Roman Catholic terms, the word which comes to mind isn't so much 'ministry' as 'apostolate'. In a sense, this is going back to apostolic succession. We are meant to carry on the task of the early apostles - to be with Christ and to share, to bring the knowledge of him to others.

We would also talk about 'evangelisation'. I think one of the most important parallel documents in the Catholic tradition to this BEM chapter is the one which came out in 1975 on evangelisation. It says:

"evangelising means bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new." (Ev.Nunt. 18)

"For the Church, it is a question not only of preaching the Gospel to ever wider geographic areas or to ever greater numbers of people, but also of affecting

and, as it were, upsetting through the power of the Gospel mankind's criteria of judgement, determining values, points of interest, lines of thought, sources of inspiration and models of life. What matters is to evangelise man's culture and cultures." (Ev Nunt 19/20)

We must first evangelise ourselves. We must return again and again to the scriptures, refresh ourselves as God's people, realise how much we have received. I sometimes think that if the Church today deserves any reproach it is the one the apostles heard from our Lord. "Oh ye of little faith". The apostles at first did not trust the power of the Gospel. They were not sure of what they had to say. They were not really confident. One of the great gifts of the spirit was that they 'preached with confidence' (Acts 4:31) That is something we have perhaps lost. We do not realise the treasure we have received in the Scriptures and so we are unable to share that treasure with a world which needs and is very welcoming to that message.

Could I draw your attention to the comments of Albert Camus about the attitude of the Church during the years of the Nazi holocaust? The accusation is not that we did not speak - it is that we did not speak clearly and so were seen to be uninterested. We did not preach the gospel when the world needed it. And the world of which he is speaking is an unbelieving world which yet needed the Gospel preached. And we fell short because it was not preached - or was preached in a way the world could not understand. In a sense, I am picking up a point made by Elizabeth Templeton, about recognising how much we have. And all God's gifts have one thing in common - the more we receive, the more we are expected to share. In this context, that applies to the ministry of the church. It is the first, the over-riding task. That is the whole point of ecumenism. The Church being divided doesn't matter if it is only us who are upset. It matters greatly if it is causing the gospel to get distorted.

So, the first point is the calling of the whole

people. The ministry is that of the Church - all of us through the baptism we have in common. So our ministry is already a united one because we all share in the one baptism.

THE CHURCH AND THE ORDAINED MINISTRY

We'll now move on to the thornier question of the church and ordained ministry. What is that task of the ordained ministry within the Church? Paragraph 12 struck me forcefully:

"All members of the believing community, ordained and lay, are *interrelated*. On the one hand the community needs ordained ministers (pace the Society of Friends and the Salvation Army, as already mentioned). Their presence reminds the community of the divine initiative, and of the dependence of the church of Jesus Christ, who is the source of its mission and the foundation of its unity. They serve to build up the community in Christ and to strengthen its witness. In them the Church seeks an example of holiness and loving concern. On the other hand the ordained ministry has no existence apart from the community" (II.12)

That awareness of the place of ordination as a subsidiary function within the church pleases me. Given that the Church as a whole has the ministry, the prime task of living and preaching the gospel, then there is place for a specific ordained ministry to enable, to encourage and inspire, to help - but never to replace - that prime ministry of the whole Church. That sacramental sense of ministry as something which focusses or inspires the ministry of the whole church is, I think, very important. Perhaps I should spell out a bit more what I mean by that phrase 'sacramental sense'.

We in the Roman Catholic tradition are a bit more glib in talking about sacraments than people in the Reformed tradition. Traditional Catholics have seven sacraments, radical Catholics have up to fifteen - or one if you think Christ is the only sacrament. A sacrament, in this broader use of the term is something which focusses, or, to use Elizabeth Templeton's phrase, gives form to a presence, or gives a formed presence

to something which is otherwise very real, very active, but somewhat diffuse, less visible. For instance, we talk about marriage as a sacrament, following St. Paul on the love of Christ for his Church and the love of husband and wife. In other words, marriage is a sacrament not just as something which happens between husband and wife, though that is one aspect of it, but as a privileged sharing in the love of Christ for his church. Marriage is also a sacrament in terms of reminding the rest of us who are not husband or wife in that specific marriage of another facet of God's love. Each marriage is unique, and so is a unique flash, a unique spark of God's love for us. It can remind the rest of us of the reality, the centrality, of God's love. What it cannot do is dispense us from finding our own expression of love. It is meant to be a spur, an encouragement, an example.

So too with ordained ministry, which we would also call a sacrament. We are moving away from a very personal 'I am different because I am ordained' understanding of the sacrament, enriching that with an acceptance of the sacrament of ordination as a focussing of the ministry of the whole church. The whole church is meant to be priestly, to be diaconal, to be of service, to be a preacher of the word. Ordained ministers are not a substitute for the ministry of all, but should be agents to inspire, encourage and support the ministry of other people. Seen in that way, we can justify an ordained structure because it picks out specific elements which should be present in everyone's life: preaching the Gospel; living the communion; serving the world.

THE FORMS OF THE ORDAINED MINISTRY

I sometimes feel that discussions of ministry, in ecumenical terms, are bogged down (particularly in Roman Catholic circles) by being a bit untidy about what we're talking about. When we talk, we take the obvious comparison of priest and minister, and in a sense, we shouldn't. Very broadly, the reformed theology of the minister is not paralleled by Catholic theology of the priest; it is paralleled by Catholic theology

of the bishop. It is not a question of how can the Church of Scotland accept bishops, it's how can the Church of Scotland not have so many bishops! (In other circumstances I might also say that the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland has too many bishops, but I won't go into that here!)

If you have ever attended the ordination of a priest you will know that there is a very blunt, and in a way, very rude, reference to priests, where it says: "We ordain these people of second rank". That is how we are described in the ordination prayer. It is like saying: if we could get away with it we would really only want Bishops, but we can't, so we have second class citizens who share and who represent and help the bishop. I am ordained to help the bishop, that is my function in the Church. The theology of Church, minister, eucharist, or parish, applies to the Church of Scotland parish in parallel with the Roman Catholic diocese, not the Roman Catholic parish.

Now in practice that is perhaps a bit theoretical, but I think there is a point, raised in paragraph 24, which has tremendous significance for our understanding of ordained ministry:

"In general, the relation of the presbyterate to the episcopal ministry has been discussed throughout the centuries, and the degree of the presbyter's participation in the episcopal ministry is still for many an unresolved question of far reaching ecumenical importance."

There used to be big arguments about whether priests were really bishops except that they didn't act as bishops or were bishops really priests who had been given an extra office. And it was quite a tortuous argument in Catholic circles, certainly up to the 1950s and 60s. I think this is a very practical point, and when we are talking about the links of the ordained ministry, we have to bear in mind exactly what we are talking about: ministers and bishops, not ministers and priests.

Another point is highlighted in paragraph 26:

"The ordained ministry should be exercised in a personal, collegial and communal way."

Now 'collegial' and 'communal' are fairly obvious; it is the personal way which is worth talking about. I quote:

"It should be personal because the presence of Christ among his people can most effectively be pointed to by the person ordained to proclaim the Gospel and to call the community to serve the Lord in unity of life and witness." (III.26)

"The presence of Christ... can most effectively be pointed to by the person..." There is a Roman Catholic tradition that priests live 'over the shop'. The parish house is next door to the Church, so that you are always at hand, always on call. And that is a very useful pastoral situation. However, it has a very bad theological follow-on; the priest is always the one who is on hand and tends to absorb all the jobs himself. If the pipes burst the priest is the obvious one to go and get the keys from, and so with all Church things. It is easier in a very practical sense, never mind the theological; it is easier for all the jobs to devolve onto the priest because he is there.

We used to have a system of what were known as minor orders in medieval times, when, for example the person who literally opened the door, the porter, exercised a form of ordained ministry. The "Lector" who read the non-Gospel passage in Church was another ordained ministry, as was the Acolyte - someone who assisted at the Eucharist, and the Exorcist - someone who got to bless things.

These were originally separate functions but they gradually lost their independent reality. They became steps en route to ordination as a priest. Even the major orders of sub-deacon and, more importantly, deacon, became stages in that progression.

In other words, everything was absorbed by the one person. We are currently trying to reverse that trend.

We are trying to recover the spread of gifts and responsibilities among God's people.

It is in that context that there is strong argument for a personal ordained ministry in terms of one person who has a specific function. But that argument is only valid if we can keep in mind that ordained ministry is not the only function nor even the most important function in the church. There is almost an emotional presumption that if you are serious about the Gospel you get ordained. We have to combat that. First of all, to set the laity free and secondly to set the ordained free. To take that in reverse order, we have to make sure that we do the task for which we were ordained and nothing else. Otherwise, what I have said earlier about the ministry being a sign to encourage others to perform their ministries is lost. The sign is distorted, the ministry is distorted.

Setting the laity free will include the process I have already mentioned, of making sure that the priest is not the only person who has any liturgical role. His task is to preside over the community celebration in which different people have different functions. However, setting the laity free is not merely a liturgical matter. Faith is more than liturgy, and there are those who point to the very real danger that involving lay people in public worship could be counter-productive if it is misunderstood. I would like to quote from the 'Chicago Declaration' which was put out in 1977 by a group of lay Catholics:

"It is our experience that a wholesome and significant movement within the Church, the involvement of lay people in many church ministries, has led to a devaluation of the unique ministry of lay men and lay women. The tendency has been to see lay ministry as involvement in some church related activity, for example religious education, pastoral care of the sick and elderly, or readers in Church on Sunday. Thus lay ministry is seen as the laity's participation in work traditionally assigned to Priests or Sisters. We object to that understanding...we recognise the new opportu-

ities that have been opened up but believe that in the long run such programmes will be a disaster if they create the impression that only in such fashion do the laity mainly participate in the mission of the church."

Then they go on to quote the Apostolic Delegate the the USA: " I believe in the laity, and the laity as laity. I was very, very impressed by my experience in Africa and my closeness and friendliness with some African bishops who don't want to hear about a permanent diaconate. They say it will kill the laity in the Church. It will kill the laity in the Church because it will reinforce the conviction already existing that to work for the Church you must be ordained."

I think that points to a very healthy tension and provides a very useful reminder to us.

TOWARDS THE MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF MINISTRIES

I would like to end by commenting on the final section of the Report, which talks about 'moving towards the mutual recognition of the ordained ministries'. Our understanding of this question is greatly helped if we resist the temptation to tie ministry and eucharist too closely together. Ministry is primarily about preaching the Gospel - not, in, the first instance, about eucharist.

I mentioned my involvement in a group of industrial chaplains from various denominations. We already share that ministry, although we bring our denominational understandings and enrichment to it. In a sense it is important to talk about ordained ministry and mutual recognition, and to ask how we iron out the important technical questions. I'm not in any way undermining that, but I do think it important to remember that we're doing this in order to talk to a world which doesn't really care either way: the world doesn't understand, and isn't all that interested in these technicalities.

Most people with whom I work are no more interested in the mutual recognition of Orders within the Church, and the technical expression of that, than most people

here are interested in the technicalities of amalgamating two Trades Unions. I have recently been working with people who, late last year, were closely involved in the amalgamation of the Boilermakers Union and the General and Municipal Workers Union. And one of the great sticking points, one which caused great personal angst to people, was that the Boilermakers Union always elected its leader whereas the GMWU always appointed its leader. Now you could see all sorts of theological significance in that! To you and me this is probably not all that important. So long as there are going to be unions, all we want to know is who the leader is and that's enough. So too with many people outside the Church. They don't really care about bringing our ministries together. The important thing is that they look to the ministry - however we choose to arrive at that sort of ministry - in order to hear the Gospel.

That is not to dismiss the movement towards mutual recognition of ministries, but I think it is important to put it in context. The whole thrust of recognition is in order to do better what we should be doing, namely preaching the Gospel. We are already doing that together. Those ministries are already mutually recognised. Those ministries have converged. We have not reached the point of recognising eucharistic ministries, but I think it would be false to presume that is the only form of mutual recognition of ministries that is possible or even important. It is certainly something which we have to keep on working for, but let us remember how much we have already achieved.

I would like to close by quoting from a passage I have found very challenging. It comes from Vatican II:

"We can rightly say that the future of humanity lies in the hands of those who can give coming generations reasons for living and hoping." (GS 31)

That is what we are talking about here, and if we fail in that task then we are betraying the Gospel and the rest doesn't really matter.

SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

A: Your own experience:

What is your place in the ministry and mission of the Church?

Are you faithful to the evangelical imperatives laid on you by the gospel?

How do you, as a woman or man, (a) exercise your own ministry, and, (b) relate to the ordained ministry?

Discuss your responses with one another.

B: Reflection: Scripture and tradition

"The spirit of the Lord^a is upon me,
because he has anointed me to
preach good news to the poor
He has sent me to proclaim release
to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are
oppressed,
to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord"
(Luke 4:18-19)

"I have given up the duties and privileges of the clergy, but I have not ceased to be a priest.... I believe that I have given myself to the revolution out of love for my fellow man. I have ceased to say Mass to practice love for my fellow man in the temporal, economic and social spheres. When my fellow man has nothing against me, when he has carried out the revolution, then I will return to offering Mass, God permitting".

(Camilo Torres, killed by government troops in the mountains of Columbia on February 15th 1966)

C: Questions for discussion

* Do you agree with Frank Kennedy that the prime task of the ordained ministry is to preach the Gospel?

* What place does the ordained ministry have in the general ministry of all Church people?

* If priests and ministers are a 'sign' to the community, then what kind of signal are they giving?

* Does the parable of the Talents have anything to teach us about how we regard our own received church traditions?

Comment

Martin Howe

I've limited my comments to the theme of unity that so clearly comes across in the BEM Report. If I had brought a banner to wave at the conference I think it would have said 'Unity, not Uniformity'. Coming from a tradition for which the sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist are not considered to be necessary for salvation, or a fuller expression of the Christian's experience and practice, it saddens me that the expression of unity has so far been limited to the concept of uniformity in religious practice. Obviously, there are many points that I could respond to, but I don't think it would be appropriate here to launch into an historical defence of the Salvationist belief or an outline of our theological stance.

However, I would like to say something relevant to the BEM section on Ministry. Every Salvation Army Officer considers her or himself as performing an ordained ministry. The administration of the sacraments is not one of the things that for us defines ordination, and two hundred young people who attended their ordination ceremony at the Royal Albert Hall this year will testify to this fact. One of the historical reasons for the disappearance of the Eucharist from Salvation Army practice was that it became such a hindrance to unity, a source of so much division. This became especially clear when it was increasingly obvious that women were to take a leading role in the proclamation of the gospel in the Army and the idea of women administering the Sacraments was so abhorrent that the equal status of women's ministry was threatened.

If unity is to come about, it must come through mutual understanding, a realisation that we may serve our Lord in varied forms, and the commitment to work together. There is in human hearts a tendency to trust in outward forms instead of seeking the inward grace, and, where this is the case, what a hindrance these forms have proved to be to the growth of spiritual life and the development of unity. Unity will come when we can all say: "my life must be Christ's broken bread, my love his outpoured wine."

ORDER OF SERVICE

Through prayer, song and symbol this short Service celebrates the unity which lies beneath our ecclesiastical division. This is the Order of Service used at the close of the Edinburgh Conference.

You will need one Bible, one candle and one Cross. At the "Sign of the Word" one member of the group takes the Bible and places it opened in the centre of the group; at the "Sign of the Light" another places a candle in the centre and lights it; at the "Sign of the Son" another places a Cross in the centre. You will also need a slip of paper for each person to write their name on; these pieces of paper are placed around the Cross by each person during the pause in the second song, and then all return to pick up a name (someone else's!) as all sing Ubi Caritas. Leave a few moments of silence after the Grace.

SILENCE

Leader: In the beginning was the Word

All: And the Word was with God
And what God was, the Word was

(The Sign of the Word)

Leader: God said 'Let there be Light'

All: And there was Light
And all the darkness in the world
Can never put it out

(The Sign of the Light)

Leader: When the time was right,
the Word became flesh

All: He lived among us
He was one of us
And we saw his glory...
full of grace and truth.

(The Sign of the Son)

SONG:

LET THE WORLD IN CONCERT SING

Let the World in Concert Sing
praises to our glorious King.
Alleluia, alleluia to our King!

Of His power and glory tell
All His work He does right well.
Alleluia, alleluia to our King!

Come behold what He has done
Deeds of wonder every one.
Alleluia, alleluia to our king!

O you fearful ones draw near
Praise to our God who holds you dear.
Alleluia, alleluia to our King!

Let us now in concert sing
Praises to our glorious King.
Alleluia, alleluia to our King!

(At this point pass round slips of paper for each person
to write their own name on, writing as the following prayer
is said)

THE PRAYER OF JESUS FOR HIS FOLLOWERS

Father the hour has come.
Glorify your son that he may glorify you.
I have made your name known to those you gave me out of the world,
I have taught them all I learned from you and they have received it.
I pray for them.

I am to stay no longer in the world,
but they are.
Protect by the power of Your name
those you gave to me,
that they may be one as we are one.
I don't ask you to take them out of the world,
I ask you to keep them from evil.
I don't just pray for them alone,
but for all who through their words
will put their faith in me.

May they be in us,
so that the world will believe
that you sent me.
The glory you gave me I gave to them,

so that they may be one as we are one.

Then the world will learn that you sent me and that you loved them
as you loved me.

O Holy Father,
though the world doesn't know you,
I know you,
and those who follow me know that you sent me.

SONG

HOW CAN WE LIVE AS CHRISTIANS HERE?

How can we live as Christians here
Untouched by one another,
Lip service paying to the name
Of sister or of brother?

Christ is the one who calls us one
Who leads us to each other.
His voice we hear, His Word we read
And yet his will we smother.

One is the water by which sign
Our lives for God are chosen:
One is the grace with which our Lord
From sin our selves can loosen.

But not in bread and wine as yet
Are hearts and hands united,
Though each can hear the banquet song
To which all are invited.

(pause as each person places their name at the Cross)

If our still hands no body take
Still bind us in intention,
Communion must come first through you
And not by our invention.

O Christ of vision and of hope
Without whose food we perish
Show us the way by which, as one,.
We'll share the one we cherish.

THE OFFERING OF OUR PRAYERS AND OF OURSELVES:

Father we rejoice that you can bring us together, so different and so differently to express the contrary opinions of our hearts. And yet to meet together in worship of one God. We thank you.

Ubi Caritas et amor

Ubi Caritas, Deus ibi est.

(during the chant you can pass round a bowl in which all the participants name slips have been placed, so that each person can take one out, not their own)

A SIGN OF SOLIDARITY

Link hands

All: Father, in silence we offer our prayers
for one another.

Leader: Dear Lord, we praise you for your promise that
wherever people gather in your name you will be there. We
believe you are with us now.

Loving God, as Jesus accepted those who came to him and
was a friend to the weak and afflicted, make our community
a place where all may come in peace. Amen.

And in our time we commit ourselves and each other to Jesus
Christ.

(At this point you might stand and take each other's hands)

So you touch us. In each other's words and in each others'
prayers you touch us, and we touch each other as a sign
that we are one with each other and one with you. That is
the way we always wish to be.

SONG:

Lo, I am with you to the end of the World
(one line repeated)

THE GRACE

All: May the Lord keep us
 in the joy
 simplicity
 and compassion
 of His Holy Gospel.
 Amen.

(This Order of Service was prepared for the SCM Theological Students
Conference by John L Bell of the Iona Community)

SUGGESTED READING

Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry: The Lima text with commentary, £1.95 WCC Geneva 1982

Ecumenical Perspectives on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry: a volume of theological essays edited by Fr. Max Thurian, £5.50 WCC Geneva 1983

Baptism and Eucharist: Ecumenical Convergence in Celebration: ecumenical liturgies and worship resources, edited by Fr. Max Thurian of Taize, WCC Geneva 1983

Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry: seven studies by John Matthews. Contains the entire Lima text apart from the commentary. Includes many useful poems and meditations for use in worship, 50p BCC 1983.

All these books can be obtained from the British Council of Churches, 2 Eaton Gate, London SW1W 9BL, or from your local theological bookseller.

We would like to hear what you think about the BEM Report, and the essays in this booklet.

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